

The real sherlock holmes



Arthur Conan Doyle is the author of the very popular Sherlock Holmes series. He wrote many adventures about Sherlock Holmes, a consulting detective who is extremely intelligent and sees the world differently than most people. Although Holmes is a fictional character, Doyle was inspired by one of his University professors, Dr. Joseph Bell, who was an expert in deductive reasoning. Doyle was quite impressed and used these same principles when he created his Sherlock Holmes character.

Doyle's education began in his hometown of Edinburgh where he attended one of the local schools. When he turned nine, he was transferred to Jesuit preparatory school of Hodder in Lancashire. Doyle then proceeded to the Jesuit secondary school of Stonyhurst where he excelled as a student (Roden). After his school years in Stonyhurst, he then attended Edinburgh University to practice medicine.

It was there that Doyle became a student of the professor of clinical surgery, Dr. Joseph Bell (Haycock). Bell came from a family of medical geniuses. His great grandfather and cousin were both forensic surgeons and made great contributions to medicine. Joseph was from Scotland, and he was not only Queen Victoria's personal surgeon, but he was also Edward VII's honorary surgeon as well. Bell was exceptionally well in deductive reasoning to diagnose diseases (" Sherlock Holmes").

He wrote many medical books and was the editor of the Edinburgh Medical Journal for 23 years (Haycock). He was also given the title by many as the Father of Forensic Science. Bell was obsessed with studying the behavior and features of people (Liebow). He could figure out what one does for a living

just by looking at their hands or studying their figure. For instance, Bell noted that he could deduct that a patient was a sailor based off tattoos or the calluses on his hands.

He also explained how the stature of a military man is always different from those who are not soldiers. It was these aspects of Bell that greatly interested Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Finally, in 1877, Dr. Bell, who was just thirty nine at the time, met Conan Doyle while studying medicine (“ Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Joseph Bell”). Bell was almost just as impressed with Doyle as Doyle was with him. Haycock wrote: Doyle proved to be a first rate student, and Bell in turn was equally complimentary, writing of Doyle, “ Dr.

Conan Doyle’s education as a student of medicine taught him how to observe, and his practice has been a splendid training for a man such as he is, gifted with eyes, memory, and imagination. Eyes and ears which can see and hear, memory to record at once and recall at pleasure, the impressions of the senses, and imagination capable of weaving a theory or piecing together a broken chain or unravelling a tangled clue. Such are the implements of his trade to a successful diagnostician” (1). It is obvious from Bell’s description of Doyle, that Arthur also possessed some of the characteristics that he gave to Sherlock Holmes.

After Doyle finished his second year at the University, he was hand selected by Bell to be his assistant. After earning this role, Doyle really began to notice Bell’s deductions that he taught to his students, and he often described them as “ amazing. ” One event in particular, Doyle remembers Bell deducting that a patient of his was a sailmaker. He told Doyle that the

man's address, which was located on a street near the docks, and his callused thumb is what gave him reason to think he was a sailmaker, and indeed he was (Haycock). Also, with the position as Dr. Bell's personal assistant, it is believed that Doyle created Dr.

Watson, Sherlock's assistant, as a reflection of himself (" Sherlock Holmes"). It is quite obvious that Doyle used Bell's deductive reasoning principle in creating his famous detective Sherlock Holmes. One can see this reasoning used in Doyle's very first Sherlock stories, " A study in Scarlet" which first appeared in Beeton's Christmas Annual in 1877 and made very little money (Roden). Just as Bell deducted that his patient was a sailmaker, Holmes makes deductions on his new roommate Dr. Watson whom he has just met. Holmes discovers just from looking at him that he was a doctor in the army, served in Afghanistan, and that he suffered there (" A Study in Pink").

From this example, it is clear to see that Sherlock Holmes was largely based upon Dr. Joseph Bell. However, Holmes was not the first detective to be used in this way. This character first appeared in the writings of Edgar Allen Poe. He wrote of a detective named Auguste C.

Dupin who also was a little inspiration for the Sherlock Holmes character (Haycock). Although Poe's creation of the witty detective may have had little effect on the Holmes character, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle gives all credit to the man who taught him everything, Dr. Joseph Bell. In a letter addressed from Doyle to Bell, Doyle writes, " It is to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes" (Liebow).

However, Bell goes on to thank Doyle, but he also states that Doyle had exaggerated his powers which is to be expected (Haycock). The Sherlock Holmes series grew to become one of the most famous detective series of all time. The public was so fascinated by Holmes' use of deductive reasoning that the urge to create more stories was prominent. Although Doyle grew to hate his Sherlock Holmes character, he continued to create adventures involving him for a few more years. Doyle credited his long time professor Joseph Bell as his influence for the popular Sherlock Holmes. Bell's use of deductive reasoning was Doyle's inspiration and motive behind creating this character who will forever be known as one of the greatest fictional detectives of all time.